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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the role of creative representation experiences in early childhood in developing a foundation for adult thinking skills, this booklet and accompanying videotape present six key experiences in creative representation in the High Scope Model: (1) recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell; (2) imitating actions and sounds; (3) relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things; (4) pretending and role playing; (5) making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials; and (6) drawing and painting. For each of the key experience areas, the booklet discusses the thinking processes involved, provides examples of such experiences, and discusses how adults can support these experiences in early childhood settings. The booklet concludes with a checklist for encouraging creative representation and a suggested materials list. (KB)

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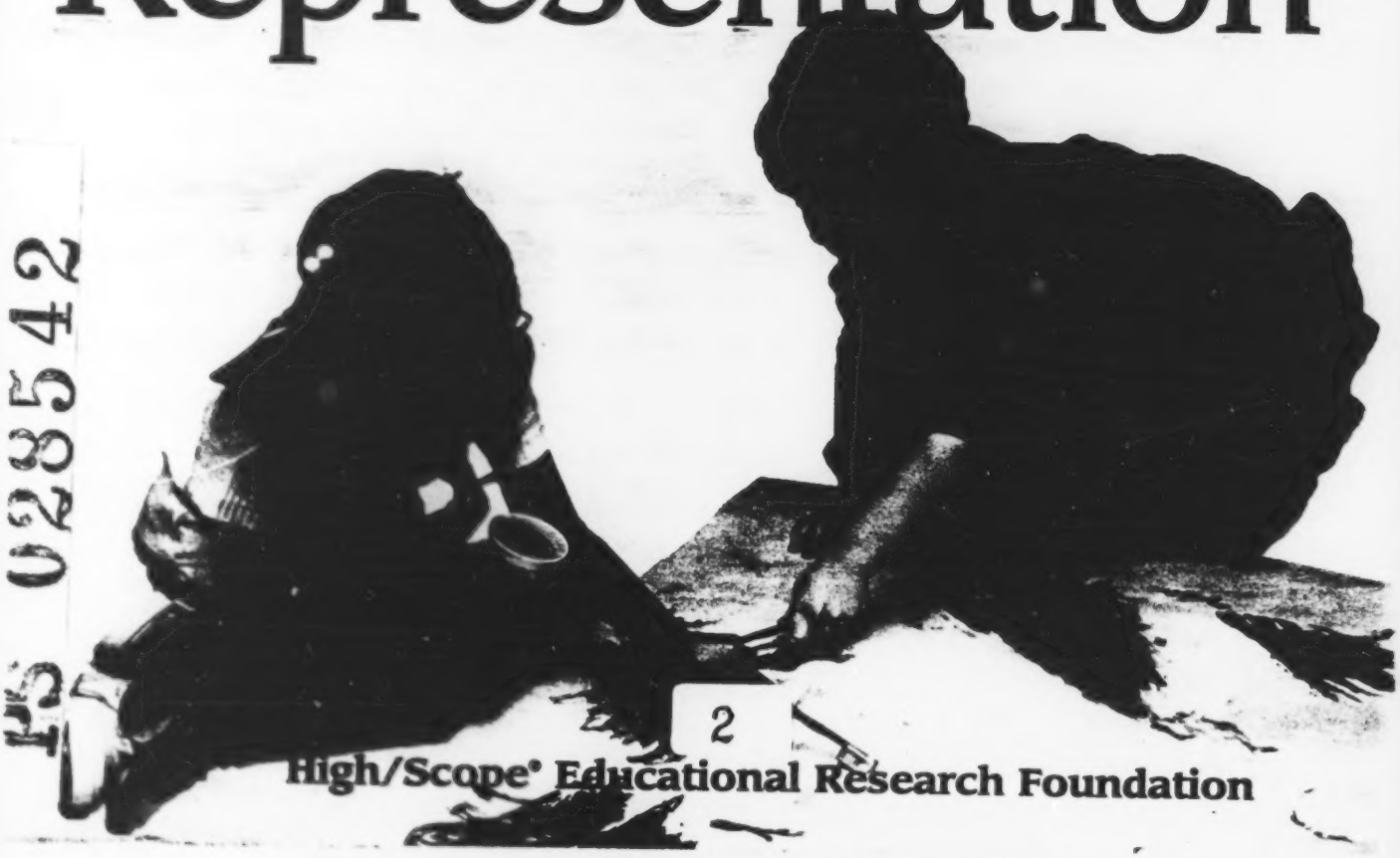

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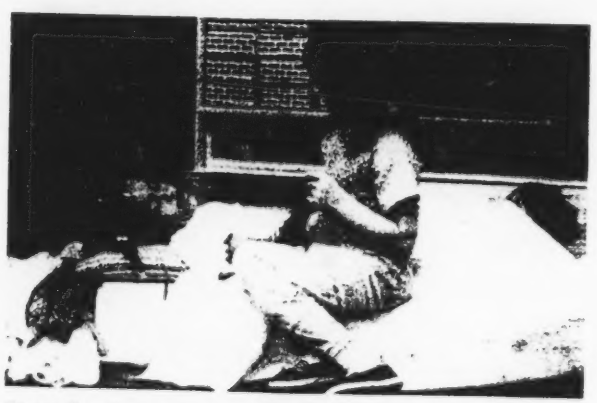
What is representation?

Representation is the process in which one thing is used to stand for (or represent) another. For example, a photo or drawing of a bird stands for a real bird; a stop sign is a symbol that represents the idea "You must stop here"; a wave of the hand is a gesture that stands for the words and emotions of saying goodbye. When we use pictures, models, images, symbols, and language, we are using representation.

Preschoolers are just beginning to develop the abilities of representation. The six **key experiences in CREATIVE REPRESENTATION** are listed at right. In these key experiences, young children are learning to create their own representations through artwork, language, and pretending. They are also learning to understand and use representations created by others.

Representation experiences are important for children because they lay a foundation for adult thinking skills. The abilities involved in representation are used by adults to solve problems, to think creatively, and to communicate with others. By supporting children's representation, we are encouraging these abilities to develop.

To help you **recognize** and **support** the six key experiences in representation, we will discuss them one by one in the following pages.



Pretending is one way children represent their experiences.

Key Experiences in

Creative Representation

- ★ Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell
- ★ Imitating actions and sounds
- ★ Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things
- ★ Pretending and role playing
- ★ Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials
- ★ Drawing and painting

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Key Experience

★ Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell

Representation starts to develop as children learn to use their senses as clues for identifying particular objects and experiences. For example, a child learns to connect the clink of metal with the keys in his mother's hands, to identify popcorn by its smell, or to recognize the sound of a parent's footsteps on the stairs.

In experiences like these, children see, hear, smell, touch, or taste something that reminds them of something else that is not visible. These kinds of experiences are called "sensory cues."

To recognize sensory cues, children form mental pictures. This helps them make a whole out of a partial experience. For example, when Shana hears barking, she imagines a dog. When Eric sees the shovel handle sticking out of the sand, he forms a mental picture of a whole shovel. When Jenna smells the pizza, she can imagine herself taking a piece and biting into it, even though she has not even opened the box.

When we give children opportunities to recognize sensory cues—the dog's bark, the smell of pizza, a piece of a shovel—we are encouraging them to form mental images. This thinking process is a building block for the adult's ability to think creatively and solve problems.

"This block smells funny—like sandpaper."

Examples of Children

Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell

- Sherry recognizes her own footprints in the sandbox.
- Amani studies the handprint she just made with finger paint.
- SeonAe runs into the kitchen and says, "I smell fried chicken—Yumm!"
- On a walk, Terrell says, "We have to stop for a minute—I feel a stone in my shoe."
- Frances, who just wiped the art area table, runs her hands across it. Feeling a sticky spot, she wipes it again. "There's more glue here," she says.

Ways to support children in identifying sensory cues

Here are some suggestions for encouraging children to recognize objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell.

Offer materials with distinctive sounds, smells, tastes, and textures.

Stock your center (or home) with materials that stimulate children's senses: paper with rough and smooth textures, a variety of art materials, scented markers and play dough; snacks with interesting tastes and smells. (See the materials list at the end of this booklet for more ideas.) Such materials stimulate children's imaginations and encourage them to visualize the objects they are connected with.

Encourage children to use "clues" provided by the senses to identify objects and materials and to notice the sensory features of materials.

Make comments that call attention to sensory cues. For example, comment on the sounds you hear throughout the day and encourage children to make comments: "I hear a cardinal, I think." "Amani heard an ambulance. Did anybody else hear it?"

As you cook with children, encourage children to taste, smell, and handle the ingredients. Point out the smell the cookies emit when they are almost baked. Comment about differences in texture: "So the slide feels more slippery to you today?"

Offer incomplete or partially hidden objects.

This is a way of encouraging children to form a mental picture of the whole object. Provide materials for sand play—this offers lots of opportunities to notice partially buried objects or to identify objects from imprints. Play games with "feely bags" or hidden objects as starters

Make a game of identifying partially hidden objects—"Guess what's under here!"

for planning time or recall time. Stock the classroom with parts of real objects: doorknobs, bottle caps, shoelaces, food containers. Encourage children to make connections between part of something and the whole thing: "I wonder what this goes with." *[Teacher picks up the doorknob.]*

Point out the imprints made by objects and encourage children to make their own imprints and rubbings.

Point out fingerprints, handprints, and footprints, and make fingerprints, footprints, and handprints with children. Encourage children to make imprints in play dough, sand, snow, leaves, or mud. Use objects with distinctive shapes to make imprints: leaves, shells, containers, sticks. Encourage children to compare the imprint with the object it "stands for."

Plan small-group times around imprints or rubbings. In winter, have the group make footprint paths in the snow. In fall, give them chalk and thin paper to make leaf rubbings.

During sand play, children make imprints of objects and may compare these representations with the objects they "stand for." The mental images children form during this kind of play are an early form of symbolic thinking.

Key Experience

★ Imitating actions and sounds

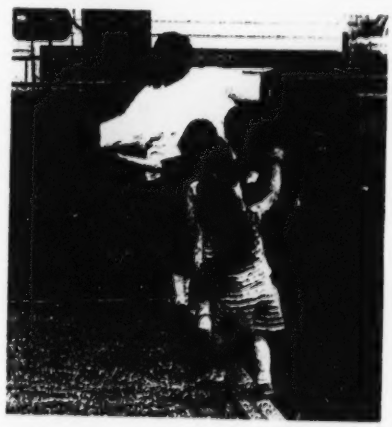
Imitating actions and sounds is another form of representation that is particularly appealing to preschoolers. All preschoolers love to imitate actions and sounds. They readily copy the gestures and actions of others, either with a purpose in mind (such as shoveling snow alongside Dad) or just for the fun of it.

Examples of Children

Imitating actions and sounds

- While grocery shopping at the supermarket with his mother, Terrell pushes a toy shopping cart around, filling it with boxes of his favorite snack foods. Before putting each box into his cart, he picks it up and "reads" the box, just as he has seen his mother do.
- Jake discovers he enjoys swooping his crepe paper strip back and forth and Malinda soon joins in, copying Jake's movement.
- Chris stretches out his leg to make a giant step, then makes another. Brittany and James follow.
- In the street, a car screeches to a stop and Nita imitates the screeching sound. The other children join in and soon there is a chorus of screeches.
- At transition time the teacher suggests children find a way to move to the coat racks. Maura lies down and starts rolling across the room, and Dom follows her.

Many games commonly played by young children (for example, "Mother, May I" and "Simon Says") are based on imitation. Action songs and fingerplays—a traditional activity in almost all preschools—are also common forms of imitation enjoyed by young children.



Children enjoy copying the movements of others.

Ways to support imitation

Here are some ways adults can support children in imitating actions and sounds.

Notice imitation as it occurs in children's play.

Watch children's gestures and actions closely; you will notice that imitation is going on all the time. Tuning in to children's imitations helps you understand what they are interested in and what steps you can take to support them. For example, Serena is pounding on play dough with a plastic hammer, imitating her father's hobby of carpentry. Peter and Gina are imitating one another as they do kick-boxing motions. As they continue, they are refining their movements, adding, and copying new movements.

Be an imitator yourself.

Imitate children's actions as a way of showing your interest in what they are doing. If Brendan is squeezing out long rolls of play dough, sit down next to him and do the same thing. If Jermaine is jumping his way across the room, join in and jump next to him. If Kara is patting her doll baby to sleep, position yourself near her and do the same thing with another doll. Wait for an invitation to talk with the child about the activity you share.

Plan imitation experiences for appropriate times during the daily routine.

Many children's songs, action games, and finger plays, are based on imitating movements and sounds. Large-group time is an obvious opportunity for such songs and games. At these times, be sure to give children opportunities to suggest their own actions for the other children to imitate. For

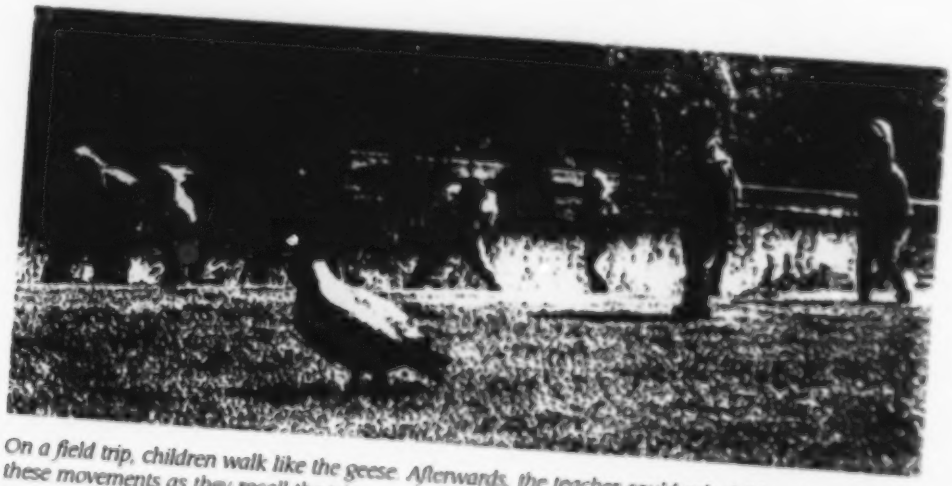
In this group activity, children and adults take turns suggesting movements for the rest of the group to imitate.

example, if you are adding verses to "Old McDonald," encourage children to take turns suggesting animals and their sounds for McDonald's farm. Then have the whole group imitate the child's animal.

Imitation games can also be a part of **planning time** or **recall time**. For example, you could suggest that Alicia tell about her plans and experiences by acting out the motions (without talking about what she did). Then the other children could copy her motions and guess what they are doing.

Another time to encourage imitation is when you are recalling together about an experience the whole group had. For example, you might have the group act out the motions they went through on a field trip. As they do these motions, they could make up a simple, repetitive song to go along with the motions. For example, they could sing, "This is the way we pounded the dough, pounded the dough, pounded the dough. This is the way we pounded the dough, at the pizza shop" (to the tune of "This Is the Way We Wash Our Clothes").

As with other forms of representation, these experiences in simple imitation help children develop the abilities needed for creative and symbolic thought. As children's imitations become more complex and they combine them with language to create role play scenes, we recognize this as the fourth representation key experience, *pretending and role playing*.



On a field trip, children walk like the geese. Afterwards, the teacher could ask children to re-enact these movements as they recall the trip.

Key Experience

★ Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things

Preschoolers not only are developing the ability to *make representations* but also are learning to *interpret representations* created by others. Preschoolers are captivated by illustrations in books and magazines. They also enjoy playing with small models of real things like toy farm animals and buildings and miniature trucks and cars.

Children are just beginning to realize that these toy figures, models, and pictures have "real-life" counterparts. Learning to understand and use such representations and to compare them to the real things they stand for prepares children for such adult activities as interpreting diagrams and maps. Learning to understand the messages contained in pictures and symbols is also an early form of reading.

Examples of Children

Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things

- The children look together at the pictures the teacher took on the recent class field trip to the county fair. "That's me petting the sheep," says Jason.
- Petulia plays with the model farm, "This is like the fair," she says, making pens out of fences and moving the animals in and out of the barn and the pens.
- Colin "reads" the message board, which indicates in pictures that one of the teachers will be absent. (A red "X" has been tacked across Sue's picture.) "Sue isn't going to be here today," he says.
- Jessica looks closely at the "airplane page" in her favorite book, naming each item on the page.

Include realistic animal models in your classroom

Ways to support children in relating models, pictures, and photographs to the "real things" they stand for

Here are some ways you can support children in making connections between pictures and models and the real objects they stand for.

Stock the classroom with all kinds of pictures.

Though it's important to put plenty of picture books in the book area, don't neglect to stock other areas of the classroom with printed materials containing pictures. For example, add tool catalogs in the woodworking area; put newspapers and magazines with ads for household items in the house area.

Take lots of pictures of children in the center and show them to children often. Make books out of them, use them at planning and recall times as you talk with children about the things they enjoy doing and have done at school, and send photos home to parents as evidence of children's accomplishments.

Encourage children to bring in photos of their homes and families. Take photos on class walks and field trips.

Stock the classroom with models that relate to real things in the world.

Place toy vehicles, animals, houses, farms, buildings, and people in the classroom. Find models that have realistic details and reflect the community you live in. Try to find toy people that reflect the ethnic composition of your classroom.

Encourage children to compare representations with the real things they stand for.

Don't force such comparisons, but do discuss them in a natural way when they arise. If you are serving strawberries for snack time, you might want to read a book about strawberries as children eat. If a child is fascinated with construction vehicles, read a book about vehicles with him. Encourage children to talk about how the pictures (or models) are the same as (or different from) the real things they depict.

Giving children opportunities to make tracings encourages them to compare the real thing with the tracing of it.

Key Experience

★ Pretending and role playing

It's no secret that preschool children love to pretend. Sometimes they pretend to be familiar people or animals—Mom, Dad, or the family pet. In this kind of pretending, they may re-enact familiar situations like going to church, having a birthday party, giving baby a bath.

In their pretend scenes children often include realistic details: the kinds of foods eaten at home, favorite family pastimes, fragments of adult conversations that they have overheard. By creating these scenes, preschoolers gain a sense of control over events and experiences they've observed or participated in. They get to "try on" the roles of people they know and replay events that are important to them. In the process, they develop a better understanding of themselves and the people around them.

Examples of Children

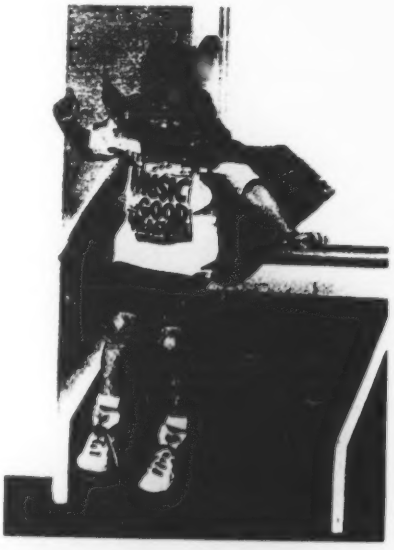
Pretending and role playing

- I'm the baby mouse," Frances says, crouching down on all fours.
- James and Audie put on brightly colored capes, then practice "flying" from the steps at the back of the classroom.
- Katie and Jason create a jail underneath the climbing structure. Jason stays there as a guard, while Katie chases and captures "prisoners."
- Jessica and Sara hold a birthday party in another corner of the playground, arranging the tree stump slices to make seats, and serving their guests plastic dishes filled with acorns.
- John and Kayla climb on their "firetrucks" [tricycles], make loud siren noises, and head across the playground to the "fire." "We're just in time," Kayla says.

Modeling clay, paper rolls, and "cash register" baskets make a great ice cream store.

While much of children's pretending grows out of family life, pretend play isn't always so realistic. In fact, it's often based on fantasy characters from fairy tales, television shows, or cartoons. Preschoolers create their own dramas of heroes and monsters, victims and rescuers.

These dramas are full of pretend battles, kidnappings, and magic transformations. Such play helps young children feel powerful and strong and helps them gain control of their feelings and wishes. Like more realistic pretending, this kind of play may be simple and repetitive or inventive and complex. It may involve one or two children or a small group.



Pretending of either the realistic or fantasy type is such a common play activity that sometimes adults forget how much children learn from it. For young children, pretending is a way of making sense of their experiences. It requires children to recall and re-organize what they know and to invent answers to the question, "What might happen if . . . ?"

Pretend play is often highly social. As they pretend together, children experiment with relationships. They discuss and negotiate about their pretend roles and situations, and they gain experience in solving social problems. In the process, they expand their social and language skills.

Children learn to cooperate and solve problems as they act out pretend play scenes with their friends.

Ways to support pretend play

Children's pretend play flourishes when adults strive to support it. Here are some suggestions for encouraging pretend play.

Stock the center with materials and props for pretending.

Children will pretend no matter what we do, but dress-up clothes and materials help to stimulate their imaginations and add realistic detail to their play.

Put materials for pretending throughout the center.

The house area is an obvious spot for role play materials such as kitchen props, toy appliances, a dining table, and extra clothes and costumes. However, you should also consider adding materials for pretend play to the other interest areas and the outdoor play space. For example, you could include materials for making pretend play props, masks, and costumes in the art area, a mask- or hat-making program in the computer area, and vehicle accessories, such as a full-sized loose steering wheel, in the block area and outdoors.

Children develop social and language skills as they pretend.

Realize that supporting pretend play means allowing children to combine materials freely from all areas of the room.

When children are busy pretending, they enjoy combining materials from various play areas—be ready for this and accept it. Don't waste your energy trying to keep materials from being moved around during play. Instead focus

on making the classroom so clearly organized that children can put everything back where it belongs at clean-up time.

Observe pretend play carefully. It's important to understand what pretending means to the children doing it.

A quick glance or an overheard phrase may not give you an accurate picture of children's ideas, so watch and listen closely for these kinds of pretend actions:

- **Children pretending to be someone else** (Grandma, the man in the drive-through window at a fast-food restaurant, a kitty)
- **Children using one object to stand for another** (small play dough balls for candy, a paper towel tube with a strip of netting on it for a magic wand)
- **Children using gestures, sounds, and words to depict a situation** (James "reels in" a fish by pulling back on his "fishing rod." Casey says, "These are the dirty clothes" as she dips some rags in the water table.)
- **Children sharing pretend play roles with others.** ("I'll be the mama dog, you be the baby dog, and Greg will be the owner.")
- **Children talking with others as part of a pretend play situation.** (Jake to Alisha, whom he is covering with a blanket as she lies down in the book area: "Time for bed, Alisha. Do you want a story?")

Looking for these common elements of children's pretending will help you understand children's interests and will give you ideas for supporting what children are doing.

Be a player! Join children's pretending.

Children usually love it when adults pretend with them, and the presence of the adult often helps them focus their attention. With your support they will often develop extended role play situations with many interesting details. So when children pretend, by all means, join in—at their invitation, of course. Once you've been invited

Speak to the children in your pretend role rather than as the teacher. "It looks like you have a really sore throat."

in to a pretend play scene, avoid the temptation to take over. Step in to the situation the children have established, offering yourself as another prisoner in their "jail" or another puppy in their dog family. Speak to the children in your pretend role (as the prisoner or puppy), rather than as the teacher. Avoid trying to redirect children's play; instead support their play ideas.

Once you've been pretending with children for a while, you can make suggestions for adding materials or other variations, but stay within the children's play theme.

For example, if the children are pretending to take a bus ride and you have joined them, you might notice after a while that another child is staring at your play group as if she wants to join in. At that point you might say, "Can we stop the bus to pick up Grandma? *[Pointing to the other child]* She looks like she's waiting over there at the bus stop." But if children don't pick up on your suggestion, drop it. Let play unfold according to the children's ideas and plans!

At Brittany's hospital for sick bears, the "doctors" wear heavy gloves as they treat their "patients." The teacher follows Brittany's example in caring for a "sick bear." After a while, the teacher may suggest taking the bear's temperature.

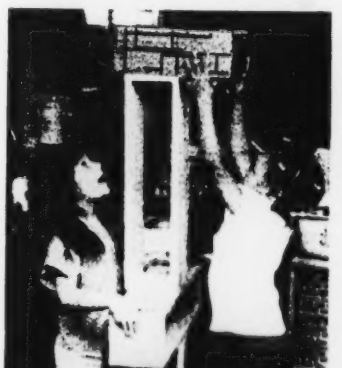
Key Experience

★ Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials

Young children enjoy making models out of clay, blocks, and scrap materials of all kinds. In fact, in a young child's hands, almost any material—Legos, Stryofoam scraps, grass, pebbles, wood pieces—can become a model-making material.

As children build their models, watch and listen carefully. Children will tell you, through their words or actions, what, if anything, they are building. You may not recognize anything specific. What you see as a lump of clay and a button may be a house, insect cage, or dinosaur in the child's mind. Or it may just be a lump of clay; the child may simply be interested in exploring the materials, not in "making something."

As children make models, lots of things are going on: they are forming mental images, developing skills with materials and tools, solving problems, and comparing their own creations with the real objects they represent. Children's models may be simple or complex; they may include many or few realistic details.



Making a model is fun to do with a friend.

Examples of Children

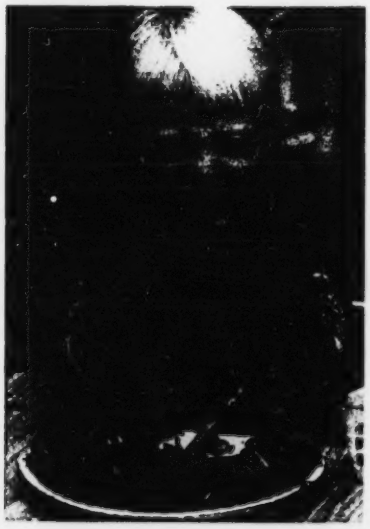
Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials

- Sara makes a "bunny family" consisting of small clay balls representing a mother, father, and three babies.
- Kristin makes a "city" using water and sand. It consists of "houses" shaped like rounded mounds and many small "roads." She works for a long time on the roads, carefully sloping them and smoothing them. As a final touch, she adds many small sticks to the buildings and roads.
- Tony makes a clay "birthday cake." He makes "cake decorations" by marking the surface with a small plastic knife. "I need candles," he says to his teacher.

Key Experience

★ Drawing and painting

Drawing and painting are additional ways that children depict the people, objects and experiences in their world. Like children's models, children's drawings may be simple or detailed. They may depict real things or have no recognizable content. For preschoolers, much of drawing and painting is exploratory. Children are learning about the "feel" of paints, brushes, paste, crayons, and markers. They are discovering the visual effects—lines, shapes, colors, and forms—that they can create with art materials and tools. They enjoy experimenting with these effects, as well as making pictures that tell a story or contain a message.



Working with paint involves making discoveries—about how paint feels on your hands and the kinds of effects you can create with it.

Examples of Children

Drawing and painting

- Terrell makes an elaborate picture of a person. He draws the body, head, facial features, arms, and legs with colored markers, decorates the clothing with sequins, and pastes on brown yarn for hair.
- Casey carefully paints his left hand with purple paint, painting the nails last and making sure no patches of skin remain unpainted. Kelly, giggling, asks him to paint hers, and he does so.
- Laying a bare piece of blue chalk on its side, Raymond covers his paper with strips of blue color.
- Using a yellow marker, Jenna draws a large circle on a piece of white paper. Then she adds a few green lines to signify the leaves and stem of her "flower."

Ways to support drawing, painting, and model-making

Ideas for supporting these last two key experiences in creative representation will be discussed together since they are so closely related. Here are some ideas for encouraging children to learn as they work with art and building materials:

Offer a wide range of materials for drawing, painting, model-making, and other art and building activities.

To stimulate children's creativity in making and building, offer a rich range of art and building materials.

For drawing and painting, provide paints, paper, paintbrushes, markers, crayons, and colored pencils.

For model-making, offer clay, play dough, blocks, and a variety of building sets. (See page 26 for a complete list of suggested materials.)

Offer plenty of variety in your art and building materials; for example, paper and paints come in many colors and textures, and blocks of different weights, sizes, and shapes are stimulating to children's imaginations. Supplement purchased materials with "found" materials: children enjoy creating with wallpaper scraps, bottle caps, yarn and fabric scraps, surplus plastics from manufacturing, and materials from nature like pebbles and pine cones.

These children are excited about exploring the new art materials the teacher has provided for small-group time. Each child has an individual set of materials.

Have a large supply of materials.

Make it a priority to provide enough art and building materials so that you don't have to constantly monitor children as they use them. Being told "Don't use too much" or "Don't use the glue that way" limits children's explorations. For affordability, offer inexpensive materials (surplus computer paper, play dough that you make yourself, a home-built wall easel that accommodates several children). Sometimes, however, there is no substitute for a high-quality tool—for example, good paintbrushes and washable, nontoxic markers.

Give children the time and support they need to explore materials.

Don't rush children when they make and build things. They often need to experiment with materials before they are ready to use them to create something you can recognize. Remember, you've had years of experience with materials like these, but preschoolers are just finding out about their properties. How does it feel to squeeze a ball of clay? What will happen if I smear paint or glue across paper? How many heavy blocks can I hold at once?

Encourage children in these kinds of explorations. Don't ask, "What are you making?" When children are ready to make something specific, they will let you know.

Be patient as children gain skill with tools and materials.

By observing quietly, the adult lets the child know she values his efforts.

Remember, too, that learning to use the art and building tools and materials involves many skills. Cutting; using paste, glue, and other fasteners; handling a paintbrush or marker; stacking blocks—all of these are skills that require practice and coordination.

Children often use tools slowly and repetitively at first, for example, cutting many small pieces of yarn, filling an entire piece of paper with one color of paint, or making long rows of blocks. Accept their slowness and don't push them to work faster or to make specific projects—often mastering the tool is the most important goal for them.

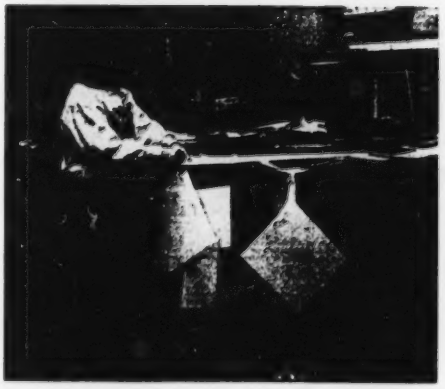
Also, don't try to correct children who are using a tool improperly (unless safety issues are involved). For example, many children will paint or draw with their whole hand wrapped around the marker or brush rather than use the "pencil grip" (hold it between their thumbs and index fingers). Children will correct such mistakes in time, either by imitating others or by trial and error. However, if children become frustrated or ask for help, it's okay to make suggestions or refer them to another child who knows the conventional technique.

Recognize that children will work at a variety of levels as they make models, draw, and paint. To support children who are making and building, you'll need to first find out all you can about what the child is doing.

Here are some examples of the different levels and ways of working you may observe:

• **Exploring materials in a simple way.** This very basic kind of exploration often takes place when materials are new to a child. Examples: Ginny pounds and squeezes play dough; Jamie gathers Legos into piles and moves the piles around with her hands; Tamara and Michael enjoy tearing and sticking pieces of tape.

• **Experimenting with specific effects.** Sometimes children discover that they can create a particular effect, and they may practice that effect over and over, with small changes. This kind of experimental play is more focused than simple exploration. Examples: Bryan covers pieces of paper with scribbles or small lines; Tara repeatedly squeezes play dough into long rolls.



Tape is an "open-ended" material that children can use to invent a variety of effects and creations.

• **Recognizing that they have made something.** As they explore materials, children sometimes

notice that, without meaning to, they've made something. Examples: Bobby is exploring clay and notices a fish shape in his ball of clay. "Oh, I made a fish," he says suddenly. Sandra is covering a piece of paper with thick swishes of blue paint. "That looks like the ocean," she says.

Mun discovers his ball of clay makes a good "dumpling."

• **Making a simple representation without many details.** Examples: Marcus puts together two play dough balls, calls it a "bunny"; Anita fastens together three Duplo blocks and starts swooping them around, telling you it is a "rocket."

• **Making simple representations and "romancing" with them.** Romancing is when the child makes something very basic, but fills in some of the missing details by describing it or pretending with it. Example: Rosie waves a long block, telling you it is a "power transformer." She pushes imaginary buttons on various spots on the block and makes loud buzzing noises.

• **Making more complex creations.** Sometimes children make ambitious projects, containing many small, realistic details. Example: Bobby decides to make an angel out of clay. His angel includes a recognizable body, arms, set of wings, and halo.

Once you have observed what children are doing, match your way of supporting the child to the level and meaning of the child's activity.

Don't question children about what they are making or building; this will only interrupt their work and they may then feel you are pestering them. Instead, observe and listen. Note the level the child is working at and the interests reflected in his or her project. Once you have some understanding of what a child is doing, here are some ideas to consider for supporting the child's efforts:

• **Do what the child is doing.** Imitation is usually a sure-fire way to support children who are making or building. Sit next to the child and copy his or her actions: Make a block tower like Sherell's; make large dots of paint on paper as Brian is doing; make your own clay angel like Bobby's. This strategy lets children know you value their efforts and encourages them to describe what they are doing.

• **As you work next to the child, wait till he or she makes a comment, *and then respond with another short comment.*** *Avoid questions, long descriptions,* or praising statements like "That's so pretty." Instead repeat what the child says or describe what you see in concrete terms. You might say something as simple as "I see quite a few red dots" or "You're sweeping lots of blocks together." If Ginny says, "I'm making snakes," you can respond, "Hmm. Snakes." Or you can comment about specific details you notice. "Oh. You're making a snake. It's long and thin."

• **Watch for signs that children are interested in adding to their creations, and offer support if needed.** For example, suppose Ginny has taped a paper head to her "snake" (a piece of yarn) and is now attempting to tape small sequins to the head for eyes. This isn't working, because she can't cut the tape small enough. She asks her teacher for help. The teacher knows that another child, Kelly, is quite skilled in using white glue with sequins, so she refers Ginny to her: "Kelly makes a lot of things with sequins. Why don't you ask her if she has an idea about what you can use to make the sequins stick?"

Another way you can convey a suggestion is by casually modeling the idea. For example, suppose Douglas has been working for some time making buildings and roads out of wet sand. His teacher is working next to him making her own buildings and roads. Sensing that Douglas is beginning to lose interest in road building, the teacher gets some plastic cars and begins to slide them up and down her own sand roads. Intrigued, Douglas gets some plastic trucks and people to use with his own buildings and roads. He becomes engrossed again in molding the sand and works hard to smooth and slope his roads so that the cars will go faster.

Adults can casually model a new idea as they build and create alongside children.

Plan ways to encourage model-making, drawing, and painting throughout the day.

In addition to supporting children who decide at work time to create things from art and building materials, you can also plan to create other opportunities for making and building. Here are some ideas:

Alex and Reid were so pleased with the "motor machine" they made that the teacher took a picture of it to send home to their parents.

• **Plan small-group activities** around familiar materials that not all children have explored (such as paint or markers) or around new combinations of materials (paper, glue, and small corks and buttons in various sizes). If possible, provide an individual set of materials for each child.

• **Avoid planning small-group art projects in which everybody makes the same thing,** like identical Easter bunnies or snowmen. Don't expect children to copy a prepared sample project or to put together pre-cut pieces. Instead, provide open-ended materials, and let children use their own ideas in putting them together. After all, it's their thinking we want to encourage, not a uniform product.

• **Following a field trip or other group experience, encourage children to tell about the experience through artwork or model-making.** For example, after a trip to the pizza store, suggest that children make drawings of the experience.

• **Encourage children to use drawing, painting, or model-making at planning or recall times.** Vary the format of these times so that children sometimes draw, paint, or use modeling materials to indicate their plans or describe their experiences.

• **Look for opportunities to introduce drawing, painting, or model-making materials outdoors.** Though these kinds of creative projects are sometimes seen as "indoor activities," they don't have to be. For example, children can "paint" outdoors with water and paintbrushes. Or they can use real paints, working on large pieces of butcher paper tacked to a wooden fence. Or they can take large wooden or plastic blocks outside to build with.

• ***Display and send home children's models, drawings, and paintings.***

The results of children's art and building efforts are important to them, so set aside shelf and wall space for displays of children's creations. If possible, let children hang up their art or set it in the display spaces themselves. If a creation, such as a block model, must be taken apart so children can use the materials again, take pictures of it. Send home children's creations or pictures of them so children can discuss what they've done with their parents.

★ ★ ★

If you use the strategies in this booklet to encourage and support children in making and using representations, you will be helping them build a foundation for thinking creatively and communicating effectively.

See the checklist, next, for a summary of what to do to encourage creative representation. A materials list is given at the end of this booklet.

Creative Representation Key Experiences
CHECKLIST: WHAT TO DO

★ *Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell*

___ Provide materials with distinctive sensory features:
- ___ Parts of things
- ___ Covers and things to cover up
- ___ Things with distinctive textures
- ___ Aromatic things
- ___ Things that make noise
- ___ Foods with a variety of tastes

___ Provide opportunities for children to notice sensory cues.
___ Notice and make imprints and rubbings with children.

★ *Imitating actions and sounds*

___ Watch for children's spontaneous imitations.
___ Imitate children's actions and sounds.
___ Build opportunities for imitation into the daily routine.

★ *Relating models, photographs, and pictures to real places and things*

___ Provide models for children to play with.
___ Provide photographs and pictures for children to look at:
- ___ Photograph the children in your program.
- ___ Provide children with a simple working camera.
- ___ Provide a variety of illustrated storybooks.
- ___ Include all sorts of catalogs and picture magazines in the art area.
- ___ Use photographs of children at small-group time.

___ Support and encourage children's comparisons of models and pictures to the things they represent.

★ *Pretending and role playing*

___ Provide materials and props for pretending and role play.
___ Support pretend play that moves from place to place.
___ Watch and listen for the elements of pretend play:
- ___ Pretending to be someone else.
- ___ Using one object to stand for another.
- ___ Using gestures, sounds, and words to define an object, situation, or setting.
- ___ Sharing pretend play and roles with others.
- ___ Talking with others within the context of the role-play situation.

___ Participate in pretend play respectfully, taking cues from players:
  ___ Follow the theme and content set by the players.
  ___ Offer suggestions from within the pretend situation.
  ___ Respect children's responses to your ideas.
  ___ Address the pretend person rather than the child.
___ Pretend at small- and large-group times.
___ Plan ways to support children's pretend play:
  ___ Add materials.
  ___ Take field trips.
  ___ Invite people and bring in animals to visit.
  ___ Discuss unsettling pretend-play themes as a teaching team.
___ Provide time for children's pretend play to unfold and develop.

★ *Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials*

___ Provide a variety of model-making materials:
  ___ Clay
  ___ Blocks
  ___ Other materials
___ Provide time and support for children to explore and gain skill with tools and materials.
___ Anticipate a variety of approaches to model-making:
  ___ Exploration
  ___ Romancing
  ___ Simple models
  ___ Detailed models
___ Find out from children what they are making:
  ___ Listen to children as they plan their models.
  ___ Listen to children as they work on their models.
  ___ Listen to children as they share their models.
___ At small-group time, ask children to make something out of clay, blocks, or other materials.

★ *Drawing and painting*

___ Provide materials for drawing and painting.
___ Provide time and support for children to explore and gain skill with drawing and painting materials and procedures.
___ Anticipate a variety of approaches to drawing and painting:
  ___ Marks and scribbles
  ___ Shapes
  ___ Simple figures
  ___ More distinctive figures
___ Watch and listen to children as they draw and paint.
___ Talk with children about their paintings and drawings.
___ Include drawing opportunities in planning, recall, small-group, and large-group times.
___ Display and send home children's paintings and drawings.

Materials for Creative Representation

Materials for recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell

Parts of things
Steering wheels, hubcaps, feathers, doorknobs, faucet handles, buttons

Covers
Sand, straw, snow, pea gravel, blankets, and large scarves

Toys to cover up
Sand toys, dolls, stuffed animals, shells, stones, rubber animals and people, small toy vehicles

Textured materials
Bark, logs, stones, sandpaper, pillows, cotton balls, twine, leather

Scented materials
Plants, flowers, animals, spices, beeswax

Noise-making materials
Musical instruments, tape recorder and tapes, timers that tick and ring

Foods with a variety of tastes

Materials for relating models, pictures, and photographs to real things

Pictures, photos, and related materials
Photos of children in the program, both loose and mounted in albums—during all parts of the daily routine, on field trips, at home with families
Illustrated storybooks
Catalogs and picture magazines
Simple working camera

Models
Dollhouse, dollhouse furniture and people
Model fruits, vegetables, flowers
Toy vehicles—trucks, cars, planes, boats, buses, tractors, trains, fire engines, construction vehicles
Model of the actual preschool room
Wooden or plastic village/city/farms sets
Plastic, wooden, or rubber animals
Stuffed animals
Animal puppets
Counting bears
Miniature people (plastic, wooden, other; multiethnic)
Dolls of all kinds (multiethnic)

Materials for imitation and pretending

Home role-playing materials
Dolls—female and male, multiracial
Stuffed animals
Dollbeds, blankets, stroller, front/back pack
Baby equipment
Broom, dustpan
Toaster
Mirror
Two telephones
Dress-up clothes and accessories
Lunch boxes, picnic basket, laundry basket
Toolbox and tools
Envelopes, canceled stamps, seals, stickers, junk mail
Typewriter, keyboard
Sturdy cardboard boxes
Low, movable partitions
Rocking chair or easy chair
Blankets, sheets, quilts, pillows, beach towels, sleeping bags, tarps, tents, rope

Cooking and eating equipment

Child-sized sink, stove, refrigerator
Adult-sized forks, spoons, knives, chopsticks
Cooking and baking pots, pans, utensils
Sifter, canister set
Plates, bowls, cups, saucers
Sponges, dishcloths, towels, potholders
Tablecloths, placemats, napkins
Things to cook and serve—seeds, beans, shells, stones, macaroni, buttons, bottle caps
Empty food containers

Materials for drawing, painting, and model-making

Materials for making models and collages

Large hollow blocks, ramps, boards
Unit blocks (all shapes and sizes)
Small blocks (multicolored and/or plain)
Cardboard blocks
Interlocking building sets, train tracks
Pieces of carpet, cardboard, Plexiglas, Styrofoam, wood, fabric, balsa
Boxes, all sizes
Boards, sticks, logs, tree-stump rounds
Cardboard or plastic tubes, egg cartons
Rope and pulleys
Wooden or plastic "take-apart" vehicles
Plastic plumbing pipes and connectors
Toy vehicles and people scaled to blocks and building sets
Clay, play dough, moist sand, beeswax
Modeling accessories: rolling pins, cookie cutters, dowels, plastic knives, etc.
Paste, liquid glue, glue sticks
Masking tape, clear tape
Heavy-duty stapler, staples, hole punch
Paper clips, butterfly clips
Buttons, sequins, beads
Yarn, ribbon, string, rubber bands, pipecleaners, shoelaces, elastic

Painting and printing materials

Tempera paints (many colors, including black and shades of brown)
Watercolor paints
Finger-paints (or liquid starch and soapflakes to add to tempera paints)
Ink pads and stamps
Paintbrushes (small ones for watercolors and large ones for tempera paints)
Easels
Jars with lids, squeeze bottles for mixing and storing paints
Plastic plates or food tins to hold paint for printing
Smocks or paint shirts
Sponges, towels, newspaper
Outdoor painting materials: Large paint brushes and buckets for water painting, colored chalk, sheets of butcher paper

Paper

Construction paper (many colors)
Plain drawing paper, recycled paper
Graph paper, lined paper
Newsprint
Finger-paint paper
Wrapping, butcher, shelving paper (large roll)
Tissue paper, wrapping paper, foil
Wallpaper samples
Cardboard and mat board pieces
Paper plates, grocery bags
Used greeting cards, postcards, stationery
Catalogs and magazines (with pictures reflecting the families in your program)

Drawing and cutting materials

Crayons (including a range of skin-tone colors)
Block crayons, chalk, colored pencils
Marking pens, markers (of varying sizes)
Scissors
Computer drawing programs

High/Scope®

PRE CHOOL Key Experiences

Creative Representation

Recognize and support these important learning experiences in the classroom, center, or home!

Imitation, pretending, drawing, painting, and model-making—these are some of the many ways preschool children **represent** their experiences. These representation experiences—a natural part of all children's play—are key ingredients for learning and development. Through representation, children develop their capacity for creative and symbolic thinking and build a foundation for reading and writing.

Teachers and parents can use this booklet to learn how to recognize and support the **six High/Scope® key experiences in creative representation:**

* Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell
* Imitating actions and sounds
* Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things
* Pretending and role playing
* Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials
* Drawing and painting

Included are examples of how representation occurs in children's play, strategies for promoting representation, lists of materials that encourage representation, and a creative representation checklist.

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